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ABSTRACT

This packet describes 12 promising practices identified in small and rural secondary schools in New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, and New York. Descriptions of the following innovations are presented: (1) two small school districts and local and state businesses that cooperated to provide a Mathematics Education for Gifted Secondary School Students program; (2) three part-time high school teachers who served as part-time administrative assistants, freeing the principal to concentrate on instructional leadership; (3) an 11th grade American history course that incorporated study of an old New England town's architectural resources; (4) a rural school district that developed a comprehensive program for academically gifted and artistically talented junior high school students that included guidance for students and parents; (5) high school sophomores who learned resume writing skills and participated in interviews with local businessmen; (6) six small school districts (feeding students to a common high school) that moved toward standardizing the curriculum for grades 7 and 8; (7) development of a "basic curriculum" for high school students that provided slow learners with a mainstream position in the school; (8) a rural high school with wooded acreage that created an Introduction to Forestry course which includes the harvesting of maple syrup; (9) a junior high school that developed a curriculum module on computer communications, online search strategies, and information retrieval in computer databases; (10) a high school class ranking system that gave greater weight to academically rigorous electives and awarded extra points for student research projects; (11) secondary students who participated in a voluntary evening study program; and (12) a music teacher who used a hands-on approach to involve junior high school students in traditional music. (SV)

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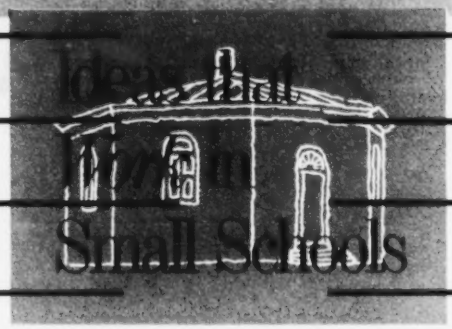

Kennebunk (ME) Emphasizes Instructional Leadership

Kennebunk (Maine) High School is proud of its recognition by the US Office of Education as one of the 84 US high schools rated a "School of Excellence" in 1982-83. Furthermore, it is ready to enter the competition again this year, when it becomes eligible to do so.

It is no accident that this remarkable high school is so highly rated, for it has evolved a leadership team model which encourages innovative solutions to organizational and instructional problems. Although Kennebunk High is not a large school (738 in Grades 9-12), Headmaster (aka Principal) Bill Gentile has three assistants!

Bill Gentile is freed from time consuming administrative minutae by these three assistants and is able to work almost exclusively on teacher evaluation and improvement, curriculum development, and public relations. He is allowed to become what most high school principals wish they could be--an instructional leader.

How did this unusual arrangement come about? First, the Board of Education agreed to take the salary of the retiring full-time assistant and split it among three strong teachers who would be part-time teachers and part-time assistants to the headmaster.

Next, a well defined statement of responsibilities was developed for all four administrators. Assistant number one would teach three periods each day, be in the office four periods and handle discipline, attendance, and student conduct before and after school. He also would serve as Assistant Headmaster. Assistant number two would teach four periods, be in the office three periods, and share responsibility with number one. Assistant number three would teach four periods, be in the office three periods, and handle all scheduling (students and rooms) and generate all reports. The Headmaster's responsibilities would be teacher evaluation, staff improvement, curriculum development, public relations and the appeals agent in student disciplinary action.

How well does it work?

First, it allows the instructional leader, Bill Gentile, to spend time in the classrooms, actually helping teachers become better teachers. Evaluation becomes a supportive tool rather than a perfunctory administrative chore. Over 90 percent of the teachers feel that the Headmaster's visits are helpful and are supportive of the administrative structure.

Second, it allows Bill Gentile time to develop the organizational patterns and teacher in-service programs needed to match a major goal of the curriculum -- to individualize the learning process for each student. Right now the staff is exploring a complex but exciting interdisciplinary team concept under Bill's leadership.

Finally, it allows time for a strong and vigorous parental involvement in the life of the school. Bill Gentile believes that parents are the most powerful supportive force in the community. He meets regularly and frequently with groups of parents to help them better understand what the school is doing and why. Input and feedback from these groups constitute an invaluable administrative tool.

Bill Gentile admits that serving as a Headmaster in this unusual administrative structure is no easy job. But, as he says, "It gives me time to do the things that need to be done -- things I could never get to under the old system."

As of this writing, no printed materials are available from Kennebunk High School. However, the Headmaster welcomes telephone inquiries and visitors. Write William W. Gentile, Headmaster, Kennebunk High School, Kennebunk, Maine 04043, or call (207) 985-6151. Please call ahead should you wish to visit this unusual school which emphasizes instructional leadership.

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York (ME) Ties its Architectural Heritage to American History

History, for a large number of students, is a dull and boring course. But when you live in York, Maine, the first incorporated city in the United States, you are surrounded by the inescapable presence of history in the form of buildings. York High School history teachers Richard Clark and Jeffrey Patten decided to tie this living history into their eleventh grade American history course. They figured that if ever there was an opportunity to make history more palatable, this was it.

Several years ago, the Maine Humanities Council provided grants to communities as part of the Maine at Statehood Grant. The architectural part of this program was the spark that ignited the innovative idea for these two young teachers.

The first year was a hit-or-miss venture. They had some help from the York Historical Society, but it was a monumental task to connect a visual link between the textbook and local architecture. Year two was better and a concentrated week of study was implemented. Again, the York Historical Society helped with materials and personnel, but the week proved to be too rich and too heavy a dose for the average student.

Back to the drawing board. The result was an innovative grant proposal that would enable the Historical Society to hire an educational consultant plus provide a modest outlay for materials and transportation. The consultant worked with Clark and Patten to develop a year long program which avoided the overconcentration of the year before. At selected points during the year, from October through May, local structures were studied in detail as architectural representatives of given periods in American history.

Peter Cook, Director of the York Museum, became interested in the project early on, and provided scale drawings and sketches of structures under study. These representatives were duplicated so that each student was provided with a comprehensive materials packet. The Museum's file of slides is an invaluable source of information about homes and architectural styles.

What have been the results? Both Richard Clark and Jeffrey Patten feel strongly that students accept history a lot more readily. Using the architectural resources of a community -- the actual buildings which students recognize as being in their town -- has forged a link with American history never before obtainable.

A second spinoff has been a significant number of students working with the York Historical Society during the summer. Imagine being conducted on a walking tour of historical old York by a high school senior who knows the differences among Georgian, Federal and Greek Revival styles, to say nothing about gambrel roofs, Palladian windows or fluted pilasters!

Parental and community reaction to the program has been supportive, especially from those interested in things historical. The biggest problem has been the disappearance of the grant which provided the educational consultant, materials and transportation. This year the program is struggling without the support, although Clark and Patten use much of the outline and format developed last year.

Both teachers are optimistic about the future of the program even though lack of funds makes for difficult conditions. Both warn would-be replicators that collaboration with a local historical society is an absolute must. It also doesn't hurt to have the director of a nearby museum in your corner.

There are some sample copies of materials used in the classroom available to those writing but the supply is limited. As both Richard Clark and Jeffrey Patten are busy classroom teachers, they would appreciate a call ahead from those wishing to visit. Write Richard Clark or Jeffrey Patten, York High School, York, Maine 03903. Telephone is (207) 363-3621.

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Derry (NH) Offers Compassion and a Program to Exceptional Students

In 1979 the Derry, New Hampshire School District found itself with several problems. Once a small rural community, Derry had suddenly become a popular place to live for persons working in Boston and in nearby Manchester. Not only were the school buildings becoming overcrowded, but the school became aware that it had no program for the gifted and talented.

A committee of parents, teachers, school board members, and administrators was formed to study the problem of educating gifted and talented students. The committee took the results of their study to the town meeting and won support to hire a full time coordinator. The school hired an enthusiastic young teacher, Fred Wolff, as coordinator and the program got underway.

Fred recruited a few volunteer teachers from the staff at Hood Memorial Junior High School and together they developed a program. It began with Grades 6, 7, and 8, and focused on three major concerns:

1. Kids with real talent in the arts -- music, theater, art, dance -- were just not being given enough time in the regular programs in the arts.
2. Academically talented kids were not being offered anything beyond regular classes and tracking.
3. Regular teachers had no opportunity to take highly talented kids to greater depths in regular subject areas.

To meet these concerns, they called the program GAITES -- Guided Advanced Instruction To Exceptional Students.

Fred and his committee also anticipated two problems -- admission to the program and finding enough teachers to handle the wide variety of interests of kids.

The admission problem was met by setting up a simple but effective procedure:

1. Referral can come from anyone -- teacher, parent, fellow student or students themselves.
2. Screening for the academically talented includes the use of intelligence and achievement test scores plus classroom teacher input.
3. For the artistically talented, outside experts are recruited to judge the specific talent.
4. Fred Wolff makes the final decision. He enjoys strong support from the Superintendent and the School Board which helps in the occasional case of an overly ambitious parent of a child with modest talent.

For the academically talented, regular teachers from the school district staff take classes in English, mathematics, science and social studies. These excellent teachers find the gifted student a challenge as well as a delight and are strong supporters of the program.

To find qualified teachers to instruct in those uncommon interests which kids develop, Fred recruits from the community -- architects to zoologists. These dozen or so dedicated persons serve without compensation and often will supply their own materials for their students. Of course, they are carefully screened for fitness of character and expertise.

Since 1979, the program has grown by leaps and bounds. About 70 students are enrolled from Grades 7 and 8 and another 80 from Grades 1 - 6; class size averages about six. Apart from the arts, there are classes in 14 specific interest areas. Fred has 3½ staff members assisting him in the program.

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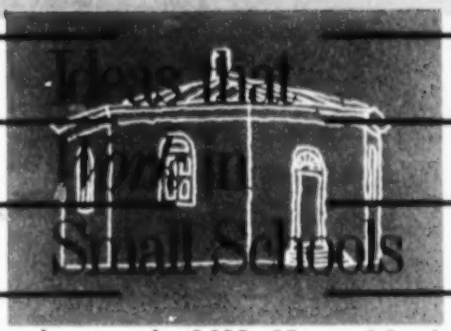
The curriculum is unusual in that it features two other offerings not often seen in gifted and talented programs. One is a guidance group for each grade level that helps these children look at what it means to be gifted, how to cope with the misunderstandings often visited upon the very bright, how to interact with peers, parents, and teachers. These groups meet weekly and have been valuable for children learning how to handle their special giftedness.

A second offering is a series of workshops taught by Fred Wolff and others and designed for teachers and parents who may be struggling with their own problems of coping with the exceptionally gifted or talented child.

For those interested in replicating the program, Fred offers a few suggestions:

1. Start with a small group -- two each of parents and teachers, one administrator and one Board member -- to do the initial study.
2. Ask the question -- why do we want this kind of program?
3. Hire a person, either full- or part-time, to run the program. It will not survive without a responsible person in charge.
4. Make sure that an in-service program geared for teachers is available. Provide in-depth orientation for parents, with follow-up as needed.

A packet of printed materials describing the program in some depth is being readied for those interested. Fred Wolff also welcomes visitors, provided they call or write ahead. Address Fred Wolff, Coordinator GAITES, Hood Memorial Junior High School, Derry, New Hampshire 03038. Telephone is (603) 432-1224.



Jaffrey-Rindge and Peterborough (NH) Have Math Whiz Program

Jaffrey-Rindge and Peterborough are neighbor school districts in southern New Hampshire which share both a superintendent and a MEGSSS program. If you are not a math educator, you may not know that stands for "Mathematics Education for Gifted Secondary School Students."

MEGSSS began in St. Louis in 1976 financed by a government grant. Since then it has been adopted (and adapted) by a handful of other large cities, of which only Buffalo is in the eastern United States. The Jaffrey-Rindge and Peterborough program is the only one in the country in a small school setting, making it all the more impressive. In combined 9-12 enrollment the two schools total just over 1000 students.

The first thing which must be made clear is that you have to get up early if you want to visit this program. It begins promptly at 7:05 every morning and Director of Instruction Richard Sawyer feels that if students and teachers can be there on time, so can visitors. (Ed. note: We made it, despite a snowstorm!)

The second thing you should know is that the program is a no-punches-pulled, high level, can't-be-watered-down, way to teach gifted students more math than they will ever know without it. An older version of the PSAT is used to track student progress. The 65 students now in the program show these results on PSAT Math:

		Average
Grade	8	440
	9	510
	10	560
	11	630

That is real progress and is even more impressive when we know some of the very best students leave every year for private schools in Grade 9 or 10. In 1987 the results will be in for the first students to complete Level V.

This is a program which is funded almost entirely by sources outside the school budget. The Board does pay for Richard Sawyer's coordinating role but this is only one of his many instructional leadership assignments. Teachers are paid only a $1400 stipend for this high level assignment and all money for their salaries comes from business and industry. Students pay for texts and testing.

The list of supporters includes one international company, NCR; several regional concerns, such as New Hampshire Ball Bearing, Jaffrey Fire Protection Co., Monadnock Paper Mills, Precision Forms, Conelec, and Millipore; and several local concerns, including banks and businesses. One teacher in the program is Allen Leach, the production manager for Jaffrey Fire Protection Company. He says, "They came to me for financial support, so I thought I'd get personally involved. The kids are great fun and the course is a tremendous challenge. But it's more than math; it teaches self-discipline and gets people to start thinking logically. We see big changes in kids' attitudes and in how they handle the problems of life." Allen has been with the program since 1983.

Ed Burt was one of the original teachers when the program began in 1981 and feels it serves a great purpose in the lives of the kids involved. He notes that it helps many select a math-related occupation, but others with no great interest in math also profit from it. He notes, "For them the great challenge is an extremely valuable experience, helping create an attitude toward academic success which many did not have before."

In the materials describing the program content, which is called EM (Elements of Mathematics), "Modern Math"

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is treated rather harshly. In fact, the authors note, "It is surely a sad state of affairs that in the traditional high school curricula, the student encounters very few if any mathematical ideas that postdate the seventeenth century." The program sets out to correct that deficiency.

MEGSS offers these advantages to students:

1. to study high-quality mathematics and to accelerate their study of mathematics.
2. to interact with other gifted students and yet remain within the geographic, social and chronological environment of their peers.
3. to meet an intellectual challenge beyond that which they are accustomed to finding in their school program.
4. to have the opportunity to earn up to 32 semester hours credit.

Other MEGSSS schools offer their courses after school each afternoon. The Jaffrey-Rindge and Peterborough planners decided this would not work, because the students interested and qualified were involved in every other phase of school life - much of which requires participation in the afternoon. So - everyone gets up early.

Richard Sawyer notes how dedicated both students and teachers are. "Many of them come in even when they have a fever, attend MEGSSS and go back to bed." A visitor will note the pure business attitude which prevails in the classes. When New Hampshire Commissioner of Education Robert Brundle visited recently, even he didn't faze the kids. All he could say was, "I take off my hat to you," meaning teachers and students.

Descriptive materials about the program state the ultimate goal of EM as: "...to familiarize the student with as much good mathematics as we can." Topics presented are chosen from a very broad variety of all fields of mathematics.

Part of the program is not teacher-taught in the usual manner. Students read upper-level books on their own, then discuss them in class with the teacher, who is expected to be able to help student understanding where problems are encountered.

Because we are so tradition-based in our approach to mathematics, probably more so than any other field, it is difficult to describe the course content of MEGSSS. It is not a substitute for some courses in mathematics; rather it replaces the whole traditional gamut of courses offered. The MEGSSS materials summarize their aim thus: "...to familiarize the student with important mathematical problems, ideas, and theories that have at any time engaged the attention of serious mathematicians and serious users of mathematics."

Remember, this material is for the top 5% of students. Some schools have experimented with 10% but this is not recommended.

The staff is eager to share this program with other schools and make these comments:

1. Send your administrators, yes; more than that, send your math teachers.
2. There is a great need to establish wide acceptance by other teachers.
3. Never try to water it down to make it popular - it must be select to succeed.
4. Teacher preparation, lots of it, is essential; there is no "cookbook" approach and it never becomes routine.
5. There must be at least a five year committment, since an additional level is added each year. (MEGSSS materials suggest a six year sequence.)
6. You must expect some attrition, since interests change and some find they just aren't up to the necessary time and emotional commitment.

If you are interested in this fantastic program, contact Richard Sawyer, Director of Instruction, Jaffrey-Rindge High School, Jaffrey, NH 03452; you may call him at (603) 532-6431. He can send information and the whole staff will welcome visitors, especially those with prior arrangements. The lovely old Monadnock Inn in Jaffrey Center will be glad to let you get your own breakfast so you can be at the school on time!

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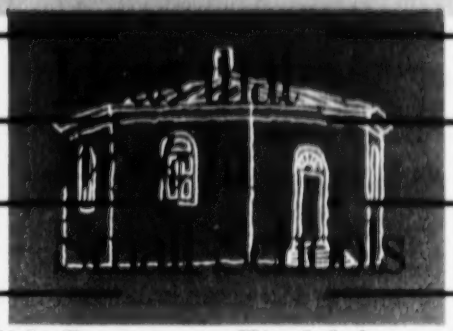

Lebanon (NH) Helps Kids Prepare to Find Jobs

Four years ago the guidance and English departments of Lebanon High School, Lebanon, New Hampshire, began to grapple with a very real problem -- how to get high school kids more aware of the hard cruel world awaiting them after graduation. Dan Swainbank, Humanities Coordinator; Ray Plante, Guidance Director; Allison Rowe and Judith Shortell, English teachers, and David Faulkner, Guidance Counselor, formed an informal team to address the problem. Career Day, a traditional experience, just didn't seem to satisfy many people.

Things developed slowly at first. English teachers were persuaded to develop a unit which would cover filling out job applications, writing resumes, and proper behavior and dress for a job interview. Guidance staff organized the interviews, the materials, and the schedules. The first time through the process, several problems developed.

First, in-school personnel (administrators, department heads and counselors) were used as interviewers. The kids let the planners know that this wasn't the real thing. Second, they started with a relatively basic program for sophomores and seniors - and heard seniors saying it was too late to be useful and sophomores saying it was too easy, particularly in speaking skills development. Third, they assumed the students would have enough information about themselves so that writing resumes and filling out job applications would be relatively simple. It turned out that a lot more information -- aptitude, ability, and test scores -- was needed by the students.

Back to the drawing board, and the team came up with a program pretty much as it continues today.

First, they developed a pool of interviewers from local businesses and industries, people who could give the kids a taste of a real life situation. The program was broadened to include colleges, which were happy to supply admission office interviewers. An attempt was made to match student interest and interviewer.

Next, they developed a stronger program, for sophomores only. A two-week unit was refined to include writing skills needed to prepare short (150-200 word) essays on interview topics selected by the students. More criteria were added to the checklist used to evaluate students. March was set as the best time for the program, for both students and interviewers.

Finally, test results were made available to the students and parents, so that resume writing and more serious goal setting could be enhanced.

Dan and Ray note several points which will help make the program a success for those withing to replicate it:

- -- stress the joint effort between English and guidance departments.
- -- include all students, not just the college bound.
- -- treat the interviewers professionally and humanely. Schedule breaks and provide coffee during the day, and involve teachers with the interviewers.
- -- provide interviewers with an orientation so they know what is expected of them. Lebanon provides such a session followed by lunch at the school.
- -- the program costs very little; the lunch and some forms are about the only extra expenses, since all the interviewers are released by their employers for this activity.
- -- make the interview as realistic as possible by having the student responsible for preparation, punctuality, dress, and conduct. Have the interviewer evaluate the students on their performances and feed this information back to the student through the teacher.

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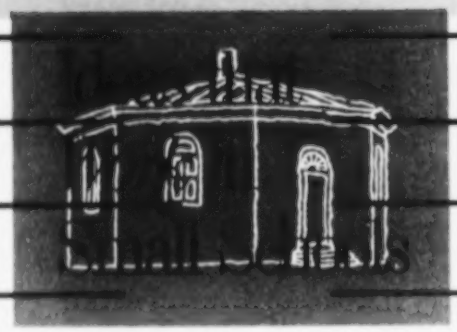
-- keep interviews fairly short. Fifteen to twenty minutes should be ample.

High school teachers often despair of every getting sophomores to be serious about anything, but this relatively simple process really rivets the kids' attention; they recognize the relationship to the world of work. Another nice secondary gain is the establishment of better contacts with employers and colleges, something most guidance departments need. It should also be noted that some Lebanon students have been hired for part-time jobs as a result of the interviews.

Some rural schools may feel they won't be able to locate enough interviewers. Lebanon personnel feel this is not really true. They find many people, including retired executives, who are very happy to donate one day a year to this process.

Should you wish more information about this program, call Dan Swainbank at (603) 448-2135 or write him at Lebanon High School, Lebanon, New Hampshire 03766. Visitors are welcome, but please call ahead.



North Conway (NH) Area Schools Learn to Work Together

True to the independent nature of its citizens, New Hampshire school districts have a very strong preference for autonomy as opposed to regional solutions for problems which transcend school district boundaries. School Administrative Unit #9, North Conway, New Hampshire faced just such a problem three years ago. (New Yorkers can roughly equate SAU with BOCES.)

SAU #9 has nine member school districts, six of which operate K-8 schools that feed students into Kennett High School in Conway; total K-12 enrollment in the SAU is 2300. The problem: Students arriving for ninth grade with an almost unmanageable range of preparation and readiness. Each sending district had traditionally insisted on its own curriculum, but it was clear to the receiving high school that students were being penalized because of the lack of some degree of uniformity.

In 1983, Dr. Francis Murphy, SAU #9 Superintendent, and Dr. William Jutras, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, saw an opportunity to address the problem in the proposal by the New Hampshire State Education Department to prepare new recommendations for 7th and 8th Grade science. These two administrators brought together interested science teachers of Grades 7 and 8 from all the school districts to look at the State recommendations; thus began the process of developing a standard curriculum. The teachers selected a standard text and agreed upon a uniform curriculum for Grade 7 and 8 science. Bill Justras presented these decisions to the SAU #9 Board Curriculum Committee, which recommended adoption by the SAU #9 Board of Education.

The Board Curriculum Committee took two other vital actions: First, they recommended that the Board adopt a Curriculum Management System "...a consistent, step-by-step method to carry out the various activities that assure all instruction is effective and current." This system was borrowed from the Pittsford, NY schools and modified by Bill Jutras to fit New Hampshire needs.

Second, the Committee recommended that the Board fund summer curriculum workshops on a contracted service basis. The SAU #9 Board approved all three recommendations, and the area had taken its first step toward a unified and articulated curriculum.

Four curriculum committees are now at work, involving 35 teachers, 20% of the teaching staff of all nine districts. Language Arts, Computer, Education, Health and Science are the subjects under study; 1986 will see an intensified effort in these areas.

Pretty much straightforward and standard practice for curriculum study, you might say. Yest, until you realize what was accomplished in an area which prides itself in independent thought and action. None of the member districts is required to accept any of these moves; all changes have been made in a spirit of cooperation to improve education for children.

The communities have reacted well to the rather drastic changes. Parents have become much more interested, public attendance at Board meetings has risen because curriculum is being discussed, and there appears to be a great improvement in public understanding of what is being taught in today's public schools.

Bill Jutras can be reached at (603) 356-5533, or write to him at: School Administrative Unit #9, P.O. Box 650, North Conway, NH 03860 if you wish to know more about this idea that works. Please call ahead to arrange a visit.

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Stevens (NH) High School Has A Heart For Non-College Students

When a school with a serious problem seeks and finds a workable answer, that should be important news for others interested in improving education.

Imagine a high school where everyone seems to be angry about something -- student fights; frustrated teachers feeling lack of support by the Board of Education; community expectations of high traditional standards but with low opinions of its school -- and you have a picture of Stevens High School, Claremont, New Hampshire, in 1981.

The High School Building Team (equivalent to the committee on the Handicapped in New York State) determined that a lot of the problem lay in the traditional curriculum with rigid standards unattainable by about one-sixth of the students. A team was created consisting of a guidance counselor, a vice principal, a physical educator and a special educator. Team members visited Portsmouth and several other schools to glean ideas on how to tackle the problem. They analyzed all aspects of the situation and finally decided on a workable solution: Write a modified curriculum.

The Administration and Board scraped together funds to employ 17 teachers for a week of intensive work in the summer of 1982. The charge: Write a 9-12 basic curriculum for students defined as handicapped under the Federal definition or as having trouble meeting standard guidelines for graduation. The teachers responded with a massive document which not only spelled out scope, sequence, resources, activities, and evaluation, but also provided a blue-print for implementation and procedures. The new curriculum addressed individual needs of students from basic education through job readiness, thus establishing for involved students a mainstream position in the life of the school. The faculty decided not to use any fancy name for it, just Basic Curriculum.

Does it work? Well, nothing is perfect, as Judith McDaniel, Basic Curriculum Coordinator tells it. But there are very encouraging results:

- -- Most of the faculty strongly support the program.
- -- Most Department Heads teach at least one course in the basic program, which keeps faculty awareness at a high level.
- -- Parental reaction has been generally positive, probably because it is a basic curriculum with none of the usual stigma attached to a Special Education approach.
- -- School fights have almost disappeared because the frustration level has been drastically lowered.
- -- There seems to be a growing community acceptance for the idea that about 15 percent of the high school students have a right to a course of study that prepares them for something other than college.

Special attention is given to the program by the administration and the guidance department. Class sizes are held to 12 (8 in shops) and teacher aides are assigned. While the rest of the school is scheduled by computer, most of the basic students are hand-scheduled. Not all students in the program take all basic courses, because Ms. McDaniel develops an individual program analysis for each student, based on recommendations by guidance counselors and teachers. If a student can handle a regular math or English course, for example, that is what he or she gets.

Chris Bottinger, Guidance Counselor, and Joe St. Pierre, Vice Principal, are solidly in favor of the program and plan to see that it continues even though Ms. McDaniel will be leaving this year for family reasons. They offer four helpful ideas for would-be replicators:

1. Have subject matter teachers teach the basic courses in their regular classrooms.

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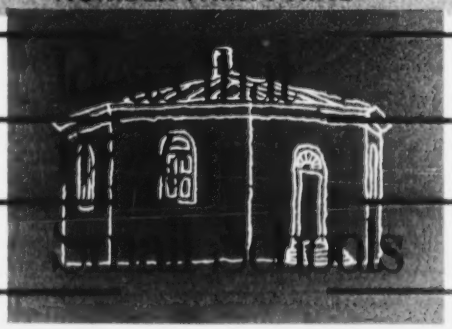
2. Use carefully selected text books instead of workbooks - these kids want books because their history has been a constant stream of ditto sheets.
3. Give frequent quizzes and tests. If necessary have the test questions read to the students and take down their answers.
4. Use peer tutoring whenever possible - it helps the brighter kids as well as the slower ones.

There is nothing earthshaking or startlingly new about this program. It does demonstrate what can be done to remove the stigma slower learners feel when they are forced to compete directly with average or better students -- or when they are relegated to a special education class out of the mainstream.

A visit to Stevens High in Claremont will show an older building without structural frills or fancy PR materials. All the visitor finds is a dedicated group of teachers and administrators who have gotten together and developed a program which says to non-college students, "You are important, too -- we care about you."

If you are interested in learning more about this program write the Basic Curriculum Coordinator, Stevens High School, Claremont, New Hampshire 03743; or call (603) 542-4931. They will welcome your contact and/or a visit.



Dansville Gets Its Junior High School On-Line

The Dansville (NY) Junior High School has had a computer assisted instruction program in place for about ten years, but the students didn't seem to be bridging the gap between print and electronic data. Betty Minemier, as the school librarian, became very aware of this "hole" in the information acquisition process and decided to do something about it. She was also prompted by the 1986 Library Syllabus which lists computer data bases as suitable resources for grades 7 and 8.

Working with three math teachers: Dick Kennell, Clayton Harris, and Karen Brion, and English teacher, Barbara Hellwig, Betty developed a curriculum module for online and information retrieval instruction. The module was completed during the summer of 1986, piloted during the 1986-87 school year, and implemented during the current (1987-88) school year. A pre- and post-test was also developed to measure transfer from a strong search background to electronic searching. All six sections of Grade Eight are involved.

The whole program is based on the rationale that keyboarding and word processing skills are not enough. A student must be taught an aggressive blending of retrieval skills and computer communications if there is to be mastery of online accessing.

Only five class periods are required for the actual teaching, and the focus can be in any subject in which a project or paper is required. Students learn a general telecommications vocabulary, refine search strategies, and get online time with a computer to implement their strategies. They also access the interlibrary loan program at Livingston/Steuben/Wyoming BOCES and public bulletin boards.

To develop the program, a school must have access to a computer with monitor and printer, a modem, a telephone outlet, and a communications (software) package. The software package may be free with the modem. Since Dansville already had CAI, the only major startup costs were a modem and phone charges. Betty Minemier noted in setting up their budget they had trouble getting precise telephone costs from other schools. She recommends piloting the program the first year to isolate these costs. Of course, there is teacher time involved in developing the modules and some material costs. Dansville is using Addison-Wesley's Einstein program for searching.

It's a bit early to determine skills transfer yet, but faculty, student, and parent acceptance has been up-beat. Betty recommends several points for would-be replicators:

1. Make use of your BOCES library media computer specialist.
2. Set up a computer committee to develop keyboarding, word processing and other computer applications for all students. The next logical developmental step is database use, online, and information retrieval activities.
3. Work with building curriculum committees and library media committees.
4. Develop brief in-service programs for all teachers and aides. They need to know the dynamics of telecommunications, too.
5. Despite its higher cost, a direct and separate telephone line will save much student frustration, disappointment, and time.

Betty feels that even in small, perhaps isolated schools, the exciting possibilities of telecommunications provide yet another way to prepare students to compete in the demanding world of information.

Copies of the curricular module are available for a modest $3.00 to cover costs. Visitors are always welcome, but a pre-visit phone call to Principal Robert Hilliard or Librarian Betty Minemier at (716) 335-3186 would be appreciated.

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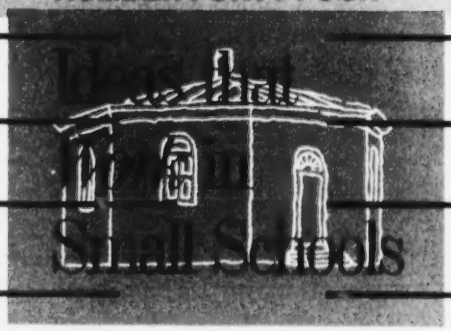

Galway Finds Traditional Music Hath Charms

One of the toughest courses to teach is the required General Music for Grades 7 and 8. Most students of this age seem to view this course as a form of auditory torture and to reject, with polite indifference or controlled rebellion, any music not on the "Top 40 Charts." But Barbara Cervenka, Music Teacher at Galway Central, Galway, New York has found a way to charm the adolescent heart.

It's called traditional music and relies on hands-on learning rather than just listening. During the ten weeks of the course, each student learns to play one of these basic instruments: guitar, banjo, mandolin, penny-whistle, piano, autoharp, or harmonica. To be sure, none is a polished musician in only ten weeks; but each has learned something about an instrument, has learned to read music, and has mastered some basic chords or melodies for such traditional music as "Skip To My Lou" and "You Are My Sunshine."

The results, to use a word from the kids' lexicon, are "awesome." Barb Cervenka reports an almost complete lack of discipline problems. Well before the opening bell, students are in the music room, ready to begin practicing on their chosen instruments. She also reports a significant personal growth as students realize they can really make music. She notes a growth in a positive attitude toward music — to the point that this course is going to be the basis for the senior high required course for non-musically oriented students. Finally, more than a few students are buying an instrument of their own.

Barb hastens to give credit for the whole idea to Rick Bunting, Bainbridge-Guilford Central, Bainbridge, New York, who developed the program, gives workshops on traditional music, publishes about 80 different pieces all arranged for specific instruments, has a teacher's guide for teaching traditional music and gives help to teachers who are beginning to use this exciting method.

Start-up costs for Galway were about $4,000, which covered cost of instruments, music stands, looseleaf music books, storage cabinets, and Bunting's workshop and music. Yearly budget for strings, picks, notebooks, instrument replacements and duplication of music is about $1200.

Parents and community apparently like the idea and are supportive. Barb took one of her classes to a Board meeting to demonstrate how their investment was working and before the Board members knew it, they each had an instrument, a student instructor and were learning how the kids learned. Adults and kids had a great time!

For would-be replicators, Barb Cervenka has a few words of advice:

1. Take a full year for preparation by the music teacher, including Bunting's workshop. You must have some familiarity with each instrument before you teach it.
2. Get the Superintendent and Board in your corner. Take them on a visit, if necessary.
3. Use the course as a building block to strengthen the whole music program. Don't be afraid — it will work!

Barb says she knew the program was going to be a success when she overheard two of the "coolest" boys in her class arguing over the respective merits of "Hush, Little Baby" and "Skip To My Lou." She and Superintendent Ronald C. Gillespie welcome calls and visitors. Please call or write ahead if you plan to visit.

Galway Central School
Galway, NY 12074-0223
Telephone: (518) 882-1221

Reference to Rick Bunting's products does not constitute an endorsement of those products by the Rural Schools Program.

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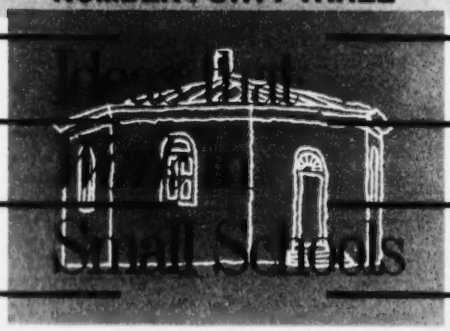

Voluntary Evening Study Program At Morrisville-Eaton, New York

An experimental program is underway in the Morrisville-Eaton Junior Senior High School. Since November, students in the 7-12 school have been participating in a voluntary evening study program. This program was initiated as one of several components in a total school effort to improve students' self esteem and to maintain an already low drop-out rate.

Every Monday and Thursday evening from 7:00 - 8:30, members of the National Honor Society, the Morrisville-Eaton Junior Senior faculty and parents provide supervision and tutorial assistance in the school library, the school computer center, and keyboarding classrooms. Students unable to attend the night program, who have questions regarding homework assignments, are able to call the school and receive assistance from the on-duty teacher or to have a message relayed to their regular teacher to return the student's call at his/her home.

In addition to the student program, adult education courses are being designed to accommodate parents who transport their youngsters to the school and wish to remain until the conclusion of the evening study program. Mini-classes including crafts, dealing with stress, parenting programs, and other topics of interest designated by the parents themselves are planned.

Funding for this program was initially provided by the Morrisville-Eaton Board of Education. The initial $200 experimental monies were extended via a mini-grant awarded by the Mid-State Teacher Resource Center. The mini grant was written by the MECS faculty and totaled $900. The funds are used to pay the two faculty members present each night at a rate equal to the money paid to a teacher for summer curriculum work normally completed during the summer months.

With assistance of the National Honor Society and parent volunteers, the program has been able to accommodate approximately 10% of the student body who have attended each evening since the program's inception.

Additional assistance has been given by the MECS PTO which provides funds for soda and cookies each evening throughout the school year.

The students, in addition to receiving extra attention from certified teachers and trained parent volunteers, are able to access the resources of the school library to complete resource projects and major essay assignments. Additionally, the program allows the school to make use of the expensive equipment in the computer center as well as the electronic typewriters in the keyboarding classrooms.

It is anticipated the program's objectives for increasing academic success and maintaining a low school drop-out rate will be met. Certainly the community and students have been receptive to this special effort of the faculty, parents, and administration to make better use of limited resources and funds in a rural community by opening the library and school facilities for a gathering place for students to study.

Further information may be obtained by contacting Samuel L. Cooper, Principal, Morrisville-Eaton Junior-Senior High School, Morrisville, NY 13408 (315) 684-9121.

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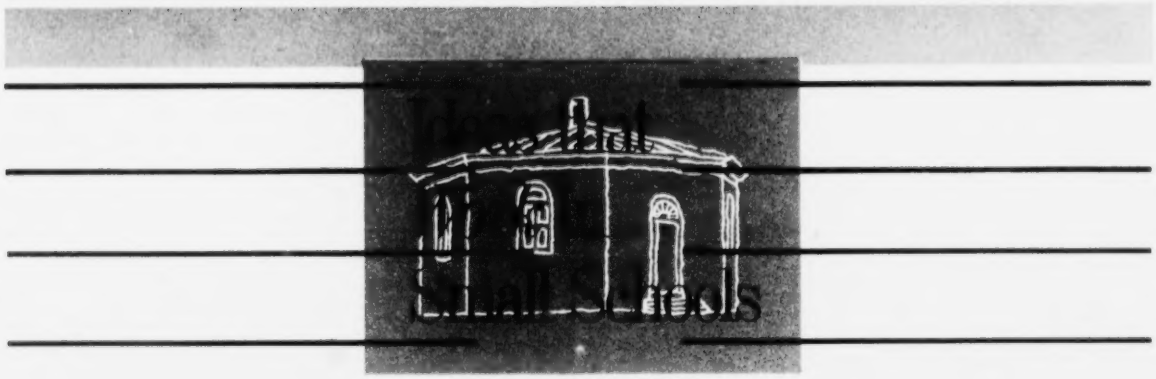

Hazen, Vermont Taps a Sugarbush for Learning

What do you do when a high school owns 70 acres of choice Vermont forest and there is an energetic, capable science teacher on staff? If you are Hazen Union School Principal Glenn Yankee, you put those ingredients together, give lots of support, and watch the results grow into one of the most innovative secondary school programs in your state.

What began in 1978 as a core curriculum in science has developed into a nice blend of science and practical application. Teacher Marc Luneau realized that the needs of all students were not being met, particularly those of limited academic talents. He proposed an Introduction to Forestry course, which would emphasize science and use the 70 wooded acres behind the school as a laboratory. Students would receive a half credit of science and a half credit of electives for completing both semesters of the one period class. They avoided making it a Vocational course, because they were aiming primarily at another group of students with unmet needs.

Open to Grades 10-12, the course at first attracted some "disciplinary" kids. Since the course caught on, Marc usually is swamped with applicants and has to limit class size to fifteen with an additional five independent study upperclass students. Fall semester, the emphasis is on science, and students learn about trees, woodlot management, chain saws, and safety. Marc pulls in guest speakers from all over the state – County Foresters, Habitat Improvement specialists, Water Resources personnel, chain saw safety specialists, and local loggers.

Spring semester is when the fun (and hard work) begins. Each student is required to work a designated number of hours both on school days and on week-ends, for when the maple sap starts to run, action is furious. Students not in the class line up during season to volunteer to work during study halls and after school. At the Forestry Program Sugarhouse (designed and built by drafting and forestry students with lumber from the woodlot) students connect pipelines tapped into 500 trees. Others clean tanks and pans, while still others ready the wood supply from firewood cut and stored the previous year. Last year 93.5 gallons of maple syrup were produced, with students doing all the boiling, filtering, canning, grading, labeling and marketing. Sold at retail, the profits are plowed back into the program.

Sugaring-off isn't the only spring activity. Each student or small group is assigned a woodlot to manage. A plan must be developed, which includes measuring, tallying, and finally harvesting selected tree species in that lot. Included is attention to Christmas Tree Plantation management. Harvested logs are used for a log cabin presently under construction, for firewood supply for next year's maple syrup production, and for some retail firewood sales. Again, profits are used to improve the program.

There is strong local support for the program. The School Board is happy because the budget impact is very small, the choice woodlot is being well-managed, and the community likes the program. Local businesses, loggers and syrup producers feel they have a stake by their generous contributions of time, expertise and in some cases, materials. And finally, students have a chance to learn safe and efficient methods of forest management and syrup production. Some have even gone on to post-secondary schools of forestry.

Marc puts great emphasis on safety and reports zero accidents to date. He does this by much teaching but also puts great store in self

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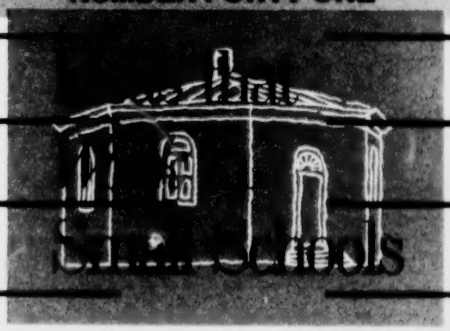
reliance and responsibility. He says, "If your administrator insists on constant supervision of the kids, forget it." They do require parental permission for the course but nothing more.

Obviously, the sparkplug of this program is Marc Luneau. This young man is a real go-getter, with boundless energy, vision, and a talent for convincing adults that they should share their expertise with high school kids. Principal Yankee calls Marc "father confessor and big brother to the kids." If you would like to know more about this interesting program call either Marc Luneau or Principal Glenn Yankee at 802/472-65211, or write to Hazen Union School, Hardwick, Vermont 05843.



Maple Grove Students Have The Opportunity To Improve Their Rank In Class

Most secondary schools struggle with the problem of challenging their top students without seriously distorting the grading structure. Maple Grove High School, Bemus Point (NY) Central School District, has apparently found a solution that really works.

Back in 1982-83, the faculty found talented students avoiding academically rigorous electives and opting for easier courses to drive up their class ranks and grade point averages. The school began an internal debate on solving this problem. After lengthy discussion, a weighted point index was adopted to determine class rank. A Freshman who got a D in a basic course received one ranking point; a Senior getting an A+ in an advanced placement science received nineteen ranking points. All courses, required and elective, were assigned a level based on difficulty of the course — the higher the level, the more ranking points a given grade earned.

It worked. Students began taking more electives which challenged their intellects and stopped worrying about the impact of grade on their class ranking. But the system still needed some fine tuning. There were college-bound students in non-academic fields who were capable but not interested in math and science. There were also students who wanted to do more advanced work within the course they were already taking. Out of concern for such students the Honors Credit Program was developed.

Bob Plyler, Social Studies Teacher, chaired a small honors committee composed of the school principal plus teachers from various disciplines. Together they developed an elegantly simple program which is open to any student in any course, Grade 9 through 12. The student finds an advisor (usually the teacher of the course wherein the honors work is centered) and sets up a research project replete with objectives, methodology, evaluation and completion date. The project is presented to the honors committee which may approve with stipulations or reject.

If the project is approved, the student embarks on the work, consulting frequently with the advisor, and following general rules of style, format, grammar, spelling and neatness. The completed paper is graded by the committee and ranking points are assigned. The honors grade does not affect the course grade earned by the student, but the resulting ranking points will improve the student's rank in class.

The results make the hard work by the committee and the student participants worthwhile. For example: Every student has a chance for a better rank in class, which helps with college admissions. Some admitting colleges have even excused students from certain introductory courses. In some cases, student research has been an entry into summer employment. Finally, graduates report back a tremendous advantage in their preparation for required research in college.

Bob Plyler is pleased with the honors program. He recommends that would-be replicators:

1. Start with a committee of volunteers who are willing to put in the extra time required.
2. Make sure the committee represents various disciplines so that it will be sensitive to the specific needs of different courses.
3. Recognize the unique problems of scheduling that different classes present.
4. Develop a workable weighting index that recognizes and accommodates differences among courses.

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If you would like to visit or obtain more information about this functional honors program, please contact:

Mr. Ken Gaiser, Principal
Maple Grove High School
Dutch Hollow Road
Bemus Point, NY 14712
(716) 386-2855

Visitors are encouraged to call ahead to schedule a visit.